

Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, we witnessed the tragedy of an inter-country adoption gone wrong when a 7-year-old boy was forced back, alone to Russia.

Last year, over 12,000 children from around the world were adopted by American families, yet only a fraction of these adoptions were processed by accredited adoption agencies. The others occurred under an unregulated process that may not have had the best interest of the families or the child in mind.

Just over two years ago, the United States became a full member of the Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption. Under the Convention, the United States requires that inter-country adoption service providers be accredited to improve transparency and accountability.

Unfortunately, these rules only apply to adoptions from countries that have signed the Convention. Adoption agencies who work with non-Convention countries do not need to meet the accreditation requirements, and these agencies continue to conduct unregulated adoptions - creating a double standard for the treatment of children and families.

We must strengthen the adoption practices by requiring accreditation for all inter-country adoption service providers.

Universal accreditation will create an adoption process that is lawful, safe for the child and respectful of the families involved.

I yield back.